SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME

* Very little is actually known about "sudden infant death syndrome." In fact, many researchers are uncertain as to whether there is actually a single type of infant death known as SIDS or whether it is a collective diagnosis that is assigned to many different types of unexplained infant deaths. (Emery, 1989; Little, 1990; Pope, 1983)

* An informal review of the epidemiologic literature on SIDS revealed 71 factors unconnected with smoking that may be associated with an increased risk of SIDS. (Samanek, 1992)

* No factor that has been associated with an increased risk of SIDS in the epidemiological literature is characteristic enough of SIDS to help predict future victims. One group of authors wrote that "no cause-and-effect relationship" exists between any particular risk factor and SIDS. (Goyco and Beckerman, 1990)

* According to several research groups, although there are hundreds of published papers on SIDS, its cause or causes remain unknown. (Kraus, 1989; Pope, 1983; Milner, 1989)

* The epidemiological studies purporting to show a relationship between maternal smoking and SIDS present no quantitative exposure data. The studies instead rely upon retrospective answers given by parents. The accuracy of this type of information as a surrogate for actual exposure data has been strongly questioned in the scientific literature.

* Even the lead author of a National Center for Health Statistics SIDS study (Schoendorf et al., 1992) which recently reported a two-fold increase in risk for infants passively exposed to tobacco smoke after birth and a three-fold increase in risk for infants exposed both in utero and passively after birth, has been quoted as saying, "From this data, we have a fairly strong association but because of limitations of the data, we can't say there is a cause-and-effect relationship here." (Kansas City Star, December 5, 1992, page A-9)

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